POST-DISPATCH

# Russia Intends to Guard Position in East Europe Whatever West May Think

## This Soviet Policy Said to Explain Execution of Nagy and Revival of the Dispute With Tito—Culture and Trade Relations With West Seem to Be Expanding, Despite Evident Difficulties.

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PREMIER NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV in his latest note to President Eisenhower spoke with strong resentment of the proposal of the United States to "guarantee" the security of the Soviet Union. He said the Soviet Union does not need guarantees, since it can defend its own interests.

There are few who would dispute this statement. No one can doubt Russia's military power today. While it has been proclaimed that the armed forces have been reduced by more than 2,000,000 men, the strength of the military establishment in every department is unquestioned.

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**BUT AT THE SAME TIME** it is rarely referred to. The May Day celebration this year showed little or no evidence of new military prowess, and Soviet officials never speak publicly of the weapons in the Soviet arsenal and their capability. Not since the Suez crisis of nearly two years ago, when notes to London and Paris declared that rockets would rain down on those capitals if the attack on Egypt did not cease, have such claims been made.

**The emphasis is all on peace, with references to the evidence of Soviet military strength carefully screened. This, too, is a source of strength, for the constant repetition of the peace theme must impress the neutral and uncommitted nations that live in fear of another war.**

From the internal viewpoint, the Russian people, as most Western observers see it, are better off than they were a year or two years ago. Great new apartments are going up on the outskirts of Moscow. While the government's own figures show that there is still a severe housing shortage, the building going forward on a large scale encourages the average citizen to believe that before too long he will be able to have an apartment for his own family rather than sharing it with another family.

In the dress of the crowds in the street there is today far more color than two years ago. A bright sweater, a print dress, a spring hat stand out. There is such a vogue for checked shirts for men that the supply always falls short of the demand. Most people seem to be well shod, in many instances wearing shoes especially designed for summer wear. One index of change—the number of women wearing lipstick—is sharply up.

In the great department store, GUM, adjoining Red Square, goods of every kind from pastel lingerie to all kinds of canned food are on display. Prices seem very high but they must be put alongside the fact that for certain basic necessities, such as rent, the Soviet citizen pays a much smaller share of his income than he would in the West. Shortages still exist, so that many of the displays are in fact a promise for the future. But the crowds are attracted by the promise and what they have had thus far apparently encourages them to believe that there will be more to come. Imports have begun to come in from the outside in limited amounts. Children's toys, for example, are coming in from Czechoslovakia and East Germany and tricycles and scooters are snapped up as quickly as they are put on sale.

Khrushchev has promised that the Soviet Union will in a relatively short time surpass the United States in the production of consumer goods and in his public appearances he gives every evidence of being confident of doing just that. The signs and symbols of Soviet strength, however much the surface of life may differ from that of the West, are undeniable.

**What the reporter so new to this so-different world inevitably asks is whether the latest Khrushchev note, with its stern insistence on the righteousness of the Soviet position, is compatible with this strength. Or is it, as some Westerners are saying, defensive, and evidence of uncertainty and even weakness?**

The answer may lie in the emphatic tone in which the note rejects, as so often before, the United States proposal to discuss the situation in Eastern Europe in the countries which Moscow designates "Peoples Democracies." This, says the Soviet Union, is intolerable intervention and if it is insisted on by the West there will be no summit conference.

Pravda, on the morning that the executions of the leaders of the Hungarian uprising were announced, carried a story from Budapest headlined "Hungarians Unanimously Approve Decision of Court." It gave interviews purporting to come from Hungarian citizens expressing their approval of the sentencing of Imre Nagy and three others to death, together with prison terms for others who had taken a leading part in the uprising.

**The meaning of this is unmistakable. The security of the Soviet Union is related to Eastern Europe and it is connected moreover with the American bases which are on the periphery of Eastern Europe. Anything which threatens to alter the situation in the states bordering the Soviet Union will be met with implacable resistance.**

The same meaning can be taken from the revival of the dispute with Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia. While this has other overtones, as in the question of which is the right way to socialism, it is related primarily to security and keeping intact Eastern Europe. This is a fundamental fact of present day Russia. It may seem to alter from time to time as circumstances change. But no matter what the effect on Western opinion or on the prospect for a negotiated settlement of the cold war, this, in the view of one observer, is unalterable.

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**ASIDE FROM THE ORBIT** of politics, where just now the differences between East and West seem to be accentuated, two other approaches are being explored. One is culture, which is very much in the news, and the other is trade, which, promises to become increasingly important.

Khrushchev is too much of a realist to have expected a favorable reply to his letter to President Eisenhower on trade, suggesting that credits might be made available to facilitate Moscow's purchases of American machinery. This was an advertisement to the West that Russia was ready to do business. It showed, also, a shrewd awareness of the recession that has slowed down the current of industry in America and is beginning to retard the flow of trade in Europe.

Khrushchev was bidding for machinery to build up Russia's consumer goods industry, with emphasis on artificial fibers for more clothing. A competition has begun between the representatives of a half dozen Western powers to get those orders.

The firm of Alfred Krupp in West Germany, which has expanded so aggressively since 1949 in almost every corner of the world, has sent a strong team to Moscow to negotiate for contracts. Krupp, with the prestige of the West German Government behind its trade negotiations in more than 20 countries, is believed to have the inside track.

But the British firm of Courtaulds, specializing in textiles and textile machinery, has also had a team negotiating for contracts. Because of the size of the proposition put up by the Russians the British have joined forces with American textile machinery interests headed by Van Kohorn. The French and Italians, too, have had representatives here angling for business.

The Russians are doing some tough horse-trading. The British were told that if they could not meet the price estimates set by the Russians then Krupp would meet them. And despite the cartel agreements between Krupp and top British interests, covering prices in the international field, the strong suspicion is that this is true. The shrewd bargainer directing these negotiations is Anastas I. Mikoyan, who is number two in the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. Of Armenian origin, Mikoyan has had a long career in the hierarchy that governs this vast country. With a native instinct for bargaining, Mikoyan has carried through many successful negotiations.

**A dark intense man with a quick, challenging smile, in talking with visitors he scarcely conceals his belief that Russia at this point is in the driver's seat. He said the other day that if the United States did not want to participate in the deals being negotiated then he was confident that British and other sources would be able and eager to meet Russia's desires. Mikoyan's attitude on trade with the United States is similar to that of Khrushchev on the summit meeting—it's all up to America now.**

A fairly fundamental difference on policy does exist on this matter. The British would like to abolish virtually the entire embargo list, leaving on it only goods directly useful in war. The United States continues to favor maintaining the present list.

**More Trade.**

But no matter what the official attitude in the West, it seems certain that in one way or another there will be a considerable expansion of trade between East and West, with Western specialists and technicians coming in to help construct large-scale plants for consumer goods. The forces making for a broad new trade development seem sufficiently strong.

Whether this is also true in the cultural department, where a sizable start has already been made, is a question that gets down to the differences between the two systems. Americans, including some ordinary tourists, are beginning to come here in increasing numbers, with Russia's new relaxed policy on visas. Alexander Nikolavevitch Kusnetzov, who negoitated the cultural agreement in Washington and who is now acting head of the committee on cultural relations with foreign countries, says that a tour of the United States by Soviet citizens is being organized.

**But it is when the cultural exchanges mean equating American institutions and Soviet institutions that difficulties arise. Thus Kusnetzov speaks of how, from the Russian side, the desire is still strong to exchange delegations from the Congress and from the Supreme Soviet. Yet this has not seemed possible, since according to Kusnetzov the leaders of Congress have not been able to come together directly with spokesmen for the Supreme Soviet, which is the Russian parliament elected by the one-party, one-candidate system.**

Likewise with some resentment Kusnetzov speaks of the failure to come to an agreement on an exchange of films. He says Russia had entered into a deal with a private firm for the purchase of 10 American films in return for the sale of seven Russian films. But the deal, according to Kusnetzov, was blocked by the State Department. According to reports here the American movie industry felt that the price asked for the Soviet films was so high that it could never be recovered by way of the box office. Certainly, from this side, the effort to broaden the channels and particularly for trade will continue despite official rebuffs. In the view of this observer it would be an error to interpret this effort as evidence of the urgency of Russia's need for help from the outside world—an evidence of weakness.

**Production Claim.**

In the announcement of the latest plenum of the Communist Party Central Committee claims are made that Soviet production has outstripped American production in butter, wheat and other agricultural commodities. These claims seem exaggerated and particularly against the surface appearance of the economy as the outsider sees it. But as a seasoned Western observer remarked, "I've heard of their claims while I've been here and I've seen a number of them come true, so I'm not quite so ready to discount them as I once was."

The political climate is rapidly becoming as chilly as the current weather in Moscow. But this is irrelevant to underlying forces that seem certain to bring about a gradual alteration in the relationship between the two centers of power.